1: Jenness--85
116, 592, 513

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

"Each family then has normally its own hut or tent, although on rare occasions, and under special circumstances, two families may share the same dwelling; in the latter case each has its separate half of the hut, though no fixed dividing line is set between them. Every inmate has certain definite duties to perform, and a definite place on the sleeping platform. The woman sleeps in the corner beside her lamp, and the little children lie between her and her husband. Outside of him sleep the older children, then any guest whom they may happen to entertain. One old man, however, would always change places with his wife at night after they got into bed, so that she would not disturb him when she rose in the morning to light the lamp and attend to her household duties. His position in the corner, too, had another advantage -- it was less convenient for him than for his wife to turn out in the night when the dogs created a disturbance."

412 Two incidents that came directly under my notice in the summer of 1915
322 were fairly typical. A native with whom I was travelling in southwest Victoria Island discovered on the beach a long, nail-studded plank that had presumably fallen overboard from some vessel. He carried it several miles inland to our camp, and there spent half a day splitting it into poles for fish-spear handles, two of which he sold to a kinsman. A few days later another native found a second plank, which he proposed to convert into a sled-runner, and with this purpose in view trimmed it slightly with his hunting knife. After consulting his companions, however, he decided that a new sled-runner was not needed, so he turned the [237] plank over to his stepfather to fashion into tent-poles. In each case the native split the plank with a crude antler wedge driven home by a boulder.

322 The uses of wood were naturally manifold. From it were made the sled,
[302] the tent-poles, the frame of the kayak, the snow shovel, the table, food trays, and other articles too numerous to mention. Odd chips of wood sometimes
824 served as fuel during the summer months, although the Eskimo preferred
513 heather or willow twigs. Willow twigs had a special use; sewn together in a long strip they provided a mattress to protect the bedskins from the snow.

STONE

333 Stone (apart from native copper) played an astonishingly small rôle in the economy of the Copper Eskimo. Their winter home was invariably the snow-
[342] hut, although their predecessors in the region had dwelt in huts of snow or wood, whose ruins could still be traced in numerous places along the coast. Loose stone boulders held down the edges of the Copper Eskimo tents; pillars of stone (in many cases flat slabs of dolomite easily piled one on top of another) supported kayaks, sleds, and other goods that were temporarily abandoned during the summer months; and heaped-up boulders protected caches of meat or clothes from the ravages of foxes, wolves, and birds; but any real construc-
324 tion in stone was conspicuously lacking. There were no stone knives or adzes,
412 no arrow heads tipped with stone, no stone sinkers for fishing lines or nets, and no stone scrapers for use on wood or hides, although implements of all these types had been used by the earlier inhabitants and were sometimes gathered as curiosities by the Copper Eskimo themselves. There were stone hammers and whetstones, it is true, but these were merely unshaped pebbles picked up when
[415] the need arose and afterwards discarded. In short, stone provided the material
[354] for two objects only, the lamp and the cooking pot; and the stone cooking pot
[170] was discarded soon after our visit in favour of iron vessels brought in from the outside.

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Figure 1. Lump of native copper. IV.D.1441. 1/1.

324 These two vessels, the lamp and the cooking pot, were invariably made from
415 soapstone (talc chlorite schist), originally with copper-bladed adzes, but in our
354 time with adzes of iron. Freshly quarried soapstone readily scratches with the
316
[135]

Caribou leg skins were made into dog harnesses, snow mittens, and winter boots. The ears were used to trim the fronts of trousers at the waist line, or the backs and hoods of coats. The light skins of unborn fawns, or of fawns only a few days old, made serviceable clothes for tiny children, as well as summer caps to protect the head from mosquitoes, though for this last purpose marmot skin was often used instead. There were certain fashions in clothing. The heavy winter outer coat (*qulitaq*) was normally made from autumn skins, an adult's coat from the skins of the larger caribou, and a child's coat from yearlings and fawns. The two everyday coats, the *ilupaq* or inner coat and the *kapitaq* or outer coat, were of very short-haired summer skins; so, also, were the trousers, though for winter sealing it was advisable to have the outer pair of the thicker autumn skin. The same principle applied to the rest of the clothing and to the bedding; wherever warmth was especially requisite, autumn skins were necessary; otherwise the Eskimo preferred the light summer skins.

The spring skins of caribou were thrown away except in emergencies, because they were full of holes from the escaping larvæ of the warble-fly, and the hair was shedding to make way for the summer coat.

Other Skins. Polar-bear skins provided very useful "sleds" in spring, when the frozen mud runners of the ordinary sled melted and dropped off. There seems to be an oil in the hair of the polar-bear skin that renders it impervious to water; hence Copper Eskimo travellers commonly used a mitten or pad of bear skin to ice their sled runners. For the same reason sealers preferred a foot-pad of bear skin to one of caribou skin, which sheds its hair with dampness. The natives of Prince Albert Sound and Minto Inlet sometimes used bear skin for clothing, more especially for trousers, because caribou were less plentiful in their districts than farther south. The animal was skinned in the same way as a caribou.

So few brown bears were killed that there was no established use for their skins. Musk-ox skins, on the other hand, were much sought after for bedding, being laid under the caribou skins on top of willow matting. The northern natives sometimes made heavy coats from them.

Hares, foxes, ermines, and marmots were all skinned in the same way. A cut was made up the back of each hind leg and across to the tail, and the skin pulled off forwards. The forelegs were drawn out and severed at the ankles, and the ears were pulled out with the teeth. The tail of the fox, owing to its exceptional length, was often slit half-way down. Hare skins were used only for towels or socks, but fox skins up to at least a generation ago were sometimes made into coats. One of the dance songs popular in 1915 among the Dolphin and Union Strait Eskimo commemorated its use in this way.

The ermine was prized very highly as an ornamental appendage to the coat; consequently, the sight of one of these animals always occasioned the greatest uproar and excitement in a camp.

Of more value to the Copper Eskimo than all the other small animals was the marmot; from its skin they made coats, trousers, caps, trimmings for the tops of snow mittens and boots, and linings for the soles of caribou skin socks. From the same skin, also, they made tool bags and pouches for holding the fire apparatus. As a rule, however, marmot skin coats and trousers were confined to children, because their use by men suggested a lack of skill in caribou hunting. The natives of Victoria Island obtained their marmot skins by barter, as the animal does not extend beyond the mainland.

The Copper Eskimo killed very few wolves or wolverines until they obtained rifles and traps. We saw one man wearing a heavy coat of white wolf skins, and wolverine skins were probably put to similar use; at all events the natives readily made a sleeping bag from wolverine skins for a member of our expedition. They skinned birds in exactly the same way as small animals, except that

the men's tool bag, but was much larger and opened in the middle instead of at one end. Some women preferred this shape for storing the narrow white belly skins with which they decorated their garments, but it was far less common than the deeper rounded type.

In summer these bags of spare clothing were cached on top of high rocks out of reach of foxes. Rain occurred so rarely that their exposure to the weather brought little harm. In winter they were stored in a cupboard-like hole under the bed, or on the retaining wall outside the house.

BEDS

The willow mattress and bed skins have been described in Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, vol. XII, page 61. The sleeping bag was merely a long sack made from the heavy autumn skins of the caribou, unsewn or slit half-way down one side so that the occupant could crawl into it more easily. Husband and wife slept in one large bag; each child had a bag of its own.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
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ings for us, stand shyly inside the doorway, kicking their feet together restlessly as though knocking off the snow. Every one is tired after the day's journey, and as soon as the meal is ended strips off his clothes, tucks them under his head for a pillow, and glides into a sleeping-bag of caribou fur. Mrs. Light is the last to retire, for she still has some small duties to perform. She calls in the dogs from the passageway, one by one, throws them a few strips of blubber, and drives them out with the snow-duster, a short stick for beating the snow from our garments. Then she adjusts the lamp for the night, turns our boots and mittens so that they will dry on both sides, fits the snow-block into the doorway to keep out the cold air and the dogs, and slips quickly into her husband's "double" bag of caribou fur. Most of the inmates sleep with their mouths open, and their loud snores reverberating inside the hut drown the less resonant notes of the dogs in the passage.

Leaving Putulik, I rejoined my late acquaintances on Victoria Island. The sun no longer climbed above the horizon, and the "day" was limited to the twilight hours from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.; but a bright moon lit up the trail for me during the last three hours of the journey. The tribe was still living in the same settlement, for the women had not completed all the new fur clothes their families required during the winter months, and it would violate one of their most rigid taboos to finish the sewing on the sea-ice,

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shades of white men; I named them for her, Jack, Bob, Mary, Jane, and soothed them with fair words until they departed. Others, that were the shades of Eskimos, she herself propitiated in like manner, and banished with her knife a few that seemed loth to depart. At last her efforts succeeded; the jacket told her that the atmosphere would clear on the morrow, and, greatly relieved, she retired to her sleeping-bag to await the result.

An east wind sprang up in the morning and the fog lifted. "Look," she cried, issuing from the tent. "Yesterday we assailed the fog and it has vanished." Ikpuck and his party appeared about noon, weary, but otherwise none the worse for their experience. Thinking it useless to search for the camp until the weather cleared they had wandered about, fishing in different lakes, and huddling together at night on patches of bare ground. Ikpuck had shot a bull caribou that strayed near them, and they had satisfied their hunger with the marrow and back fat, seasoning them with raw fish.

The Runner now decided to move to a lake farther north where they had caught many fish during their late excursion; but Ikpuck wanted to continue eastward in search of more caribou. The former departed first. We watched his family disappear over the ridge, then packed up our own equipment and marched away. So our last link with the tribe was severed, and the dispersal of the band complete.